REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 12, 2003 (Paper No. 38). Claim 35 has been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and Claim 39 has been added. Claims 34 and 36 to 39 are in the application, all of which are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 34 to 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,801,856 (Moghadam); and Claims 34 to 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,157,726 (Merkle). As indicated above, Claim 35 has been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the remaining rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns the input and processing of data, in which data is input via a first input means, and secret key information is input from an external device via a second input means. A digital signal is generated based on the input data and the secret key information, and the digital signature is output to the external device.

Thus, among its many features, the invention inputs data from an internal unit, inputs secret key information from an external device, and outputs a digital signature back to the external device.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 34 defines a data input apparatus comprising a first input means for inputting data from an internal unit, and a second input means for inputting secret key information from an external device. The

data input apparatus further comprises generating means for generating a digital signature using the data and the secret key information, and outputting means for outputting the digital signature to the external device.

Claims 37 and 38 are respectively drawn to a method and a computer-readable memory medium.

Independent Claim 39 defines a data input system comprising first input means for inputting data, a compressor means for compressing the data, and a second input means for inputting secret key information store in an external device. The data input system further comprises generating means for generating a digital signature using the compressed data and the secret key information, first outputting means for outputting the digital signature to the external device, and second output means for outputting the input data.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention. In particular, the applied art is not seen to provide for the input of data from an internal unit, the input of secret key information from an external device, and the output of a digital signature back to the external device.

Moghadam discloses a secure photographic system, including a scanner for scanning an image on film to generate a digital image I, an indicia detecting means for detecting the indicia on the film to generate a digital signature, and a digital image processing means for applying the digital signature onto the digital image. See Moghadam, Abstract; col. 3, ll. 49 to 60; and Figure 1. In Moghadam, however, both the image 12 and the indicia 14, representing the desired image security feature S, are seen to be input together from a single image bearing medium, such as photographic film or print

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10. See col. 3, ll. 24 to 27; and Figure 1. Furthermore, the digital image I and the security feature S are supplied to a digital image processor, where the security feature is seen to be applied to a subsequently produced digital image.

Accordingly, since Moghadam is seen to read both the image data and the secret key information from the same external medium, and since the digital signature is seen to be output to a different external medium, Moghadam is not seen to teach or to suggest the features of the present invention, in which data is input from an internal unit, secret key information is input from an external device, and a digital signature is output back to the external device.

Merkle is likewise not seen to teach or suggest the features of the present invention. Specifically, Merkle discloses a system for authenticating a hard copy of an original document, in which a document and an ID card are inserted into the machine, a digital signature is produced, and a hard copy of the document is output containing the digital signature. See Merkle, Abstract; and Figure 3. In Merkle, however, secret key information is input by entering a "signing card" into card input device 51. See col. 6, ll 2 to 8; and col. 7, ll. 65 to 69. Using this secret key information input by the signing card, a digital signature is generated, which is affixed to an optical copy of the original document. See col. 6, ll 41 to 46.

Since both the data and the secret key information in Merkle are seen to be input from external sources, and since the digital signature is merged with the optical copy and not transmitted back to the signing card, Merkle is not seen to teach or to suggest the features of the present invention, in which data is input from an internal unit, secret key

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information is input from an external device, and a digital signature is output back to the external device.
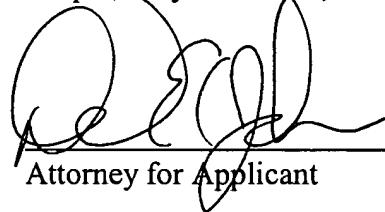
As such, since neither Moghadam nor Merkle teach or suggest at least the features of input of data from an internal unit, input of secret key information from an external device, and output of a digital signature back to the external device, the § 102 rejections should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 34 and 36 to 39 are believed to be allowable over the applied references.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested of the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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